Family Readiness Groups

"Family Readiness Groups (FRGs) have become absolutely instrumental in caring for families while Soldiers are deployed. Their ***primary functions*** are to ***provide a communication network and crisis support***."

LTG Benjamin R. Mixon

What are FRGs?

- FRGs are a Command-Sponsored Organization of Soldiers, Civilian Employees, Volunteers, and Family Members under AR 600-20 (Army Command Policy)
  - FRGs are not Private Organizations (POs)
  - FRGs are not Morale Welfare and Recreation (MWR) Programs
  - FRGs are not “Social Groups”
    - However, they can sponsor some social activities to enhance camaraderie, provide stress relief, and reduce family loneliness during deployments

FRG Mission

- To act as extension of unit in providing official, accurate command information
- To provide mutual support between command and FRG membership
- To advocate more efficient use of available community resources
- To help families solve problems at lowest level

Authorized FRG Mission-Essential Activities

- FRG Member Meetings
- FRG Staff and Committee Meetings
- Publication and Distribution of FRG Newsletters
- Maintenance of Updated Family Rosters and Readiness Information
- Establishment of Telephone Trees and Distribution Lists
- Scheduling Educational Briefings

Authorized FRG Non-Mission Essential Activities

- FRG Social Functions
- Publication and Distribution of an FRG Newsletter Containing Predominantly Unofficial Information
- FRG Fundraising

Types of Funding Available to Support FRGs

- Appropriated Funds (APFs)
  - Tax Dollars from the Unit Operating Budget
- FRG Informal Funds
  - Similar to, but distinct from Unit Informal Funds
- Supplemental Mission Funds
  - Come from the Garrison Commander via ACS

Appropriated Funds

- APFs are:
  - Used to support FRG Mission-Essential Activities
  - Controlled by Unit Commander
  - Budgeted Annually
  - Subject to all the same rules as Operation and Maintenance Funds plus some special FRG rules found in Appendix J of AR 608-1

Authorized Uses of APFs

- APFs may be used for:
  - Deployment / Redeployment Briefings
  - Classes / Workshops
  - Newcomer Orientations
  - FRG Member Meetings
  - Travel / Training of Statutory Volunteers
  - Childcare during Command-Sponsored Training
  - Needed Family Support during Contingency Operations

Authorized Uses of APFs

- APFs may also be used for:
  - Official Deployment or Welcome Home Ceremonies
  - Printing / Mailing “Official” FRG Newsletters
  - Reimbursement of Statutory FRG Volunteers’ Incidental Expenses
  - Conference Rooms for FRG Meetings (not parties)
  - Maintenance of Updated Family Rosters and Family Readiness Information

Prohibited Uses of APFs

- APFs may not be used for:
  - Unofficial Activities (such as fundraising, family events, or gifts)
  - Volunteer Awards (other than Certificates of Recognition)
  - Purely Social Activities
  - Refreshments at FRG Meetings

FRG Informal Funds

- Commander may authorize FRG to have One Informal Fund
    - FRG Informal Fund may not exceed $10,000 income per year or be mixed with other funds
    - FRG Informal Funds are Private Funds that are used to benefit the FRG membership as a whole
    - SOP and financial report are required
- Subject to Post Policy, Commander may authorize FRG to conduct internal fundraising to raise money for FRG Informal Fund (“internal” usually equals “on-post”).
- Commanders may accept unsolicited donation of

Authorized Uses for Informal Funds

- FRG Informal Funds may be used for Non-Mission-Essential Activities such as :

  - FRG Newsletters containing predominantly Unofficial Information

  - Volunteer Recognition (not otherwise funded with APFs)

  - Unofficial Unit Send-offs and Homecoming Social Events

  - Parties or Outings

Prohibited Uses of Informal Funds

- FRG Informal Funds may not be used to:

  - Purchase Traditional Military Gifts, such as Soldier Farewell Gifts

  - Fund a Unit Ball

  - Augment a Unit Informal Fund

  - Purchase any other item that can be purchased with APFs

Supplemental Mission Funds

- Supplemental Mission Funds are non-appropriated funds
- Controlled by the Garrison Commander
  - Garrison Commander may accept unsolicited donations intended for FRGs
  - Garrison Commander may redistribute for use by FRGs
  - Have no impact on $10,000 FRG Informal Fund Cap
- Use of Supplemental Mission Funds must withstand test of public scrutiny

Uses of Supplemental Mission Funds

- Supplemental Mission Funds may be used for:
  - Any purpose that supports FRG Mission
- Supplemental Mission Funds may not be used for:
  - Items that may be purchased with APF

Private Organizations (POs)

- Although FRGs are not POs, POs which support some of the same objectives as FRGs may be created and permitted to operate on-post by the Garrison Commander.
  - POs must have a valid charter, constitution, and bylaws
  - POs may not receive preferential treatment from Army officials
- FRG leaders may not be managers or board members of such POs
- POs have different fiscal rules
  - POs can conduct Off-Post Fundraisers
  - POs can make donations to Unit Informal Funds, FRG Informal Funds, or to Supplemental Mission Funds

Recurring Issues

- Unlawful Solicitation of Gifts
  - Soldiers, FRG Leaders, Family Members, and FRSAs are prohibited from asking anyone outside the FRG/Unit for donations
  - “Donations” include “Anything of Value”
    - Money, Supplies, Discounts, Free Admission
- Unlawful Augmentation of APFs
  - Informal Funds may not be used to purchase anything that could be funded by APF

More Recurring Issues

- Welcome Home Banners at Official Ceremonies
  - “Decoration” that Unit can buy with APF
- Personalized Welcome Home Posters and Banners
  - Supplies could be purchased with FRG Informal Funds and decorated by FRG members at an FRG Function.
- Welcome Home Packets with Personal Hygiene Items
  - Could be purchased with FRG Informal Funds
- Presentation of Leis upon Redeployment
  - Could be purchased with FRG Informal Funds

PLANNING FUNDRAISING

- Have FRG meetings to determine event funds and how they will be used
- Document group’s decision
- Determine/Estimate Costs
- Don’t try to raise funds right before an event
- Have a plan, earmark money, don’t let money sit in an account without any designated use

FUNDRAISING DON'TS

- Always avoid even the appearance that the FRG is engaged in inappropriate activity!
- FRGs may not be used as a vehicle to solicit captive audiences for commercial purposes.
- FRGs will not engage in the resale of alcoholic beverages or tobacco.
- No raffles, lotteries, or any form of gambling
- Soldiers cannot be ordered to participate in FRG Fundraisers. Voluntary basis only.
- FRG's cannot compete with AAFES or MWR (Resale Items).

FUNDRAISING IDEAS

- Garage Sales
- Bagel, doughnut/coffee sales
- Bake sales
- Car washes/Dog washes
- Recycling
- Gift wrapping
- Boxed Meals
- Silent Auctions
- T-Shirt Sales
- Coffee Mug Sales
- Unit photos
- Door prizes
- Pizza night
- MWR Vending Machines (Popcorn, Cotton Candy, Shaved Ice, etc. 655-0143
- Never put a price tag on an item, only a suggested donation